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XII.

NASIR-I-KHUSRAW,

POET, TRAVELLER, AND PROPAGANDIST.

By EDWARD G. BROWNE, M.A., M.R.A.S., F.B.A.

EVERY Persian scholar must, I suppose, have meditated at some time or other on the extraordinary disproportion between the vast number of Persian poets whose names are familiar to him, and whose lives are enshrined in the Biographies of 'Awfí, Dawlatsháh, Taqiyyu'd-Dín Káshí, Luṭf 'Alí Beg, and other *tadhkira*-writers, and the small number whose works are read, even in the East, save by the very curious or diligent student. So far as the West is concerned, it may be said, I think, that of only four, Firdawsí, Sa'dí, 'Umar Khayyám, and Ḥáfiḍh, does any clear and definite idea exist amongst educated Europeans not specially interested in Oriental literature. Of these four, thanks primarily to Edward FitzGerald, 'Umar Khayyám is certainly the most popular in the West, especially in Europe and America; though 'Awfí, writing exactly a century after his death, totally ignores him, and Dawlatsháh only mentions him incidentally in the course of another biography; while even his personal friend and admirer, Niḍhámí-i-'Arúḍí of Samarqand, places him in his *Chahár Maqála* not in the section which he devotes to poets, but in that which deals with astronomers. Ḥáfiḍh, accessible to non-Orientalists in England in at least three good metrical translations, those of Hermann Bicknell, Miss Gertrude Bell, and Mr. Walter Leaf, and in Germany in the complete versified translation of Rosenzweig-Schwannau, certainly comes next in point of popularity. Sa'dí, whose *Gulistán* was probably the first Persian classic edited and translated in Europe (since a fine edition with Latin rendering was

published in Holland in the seventeenth century), probably comes next, though of his poetry little beyond the *Bústán* is read by the ordinary Persian student outside the confines of Persia, where his fame rests rather on his lyrical verse. Firdawsí, in spite of his immense reputation, is in reality little known to the average European man of letters, save through one or two episodes of his *Book of Kings*—notably that of Rustam and Suhráb—which have afforded material for distinguished Western poets. To these four poets we might perhaps add Jámí, whose Salámán and Absál FitzGerald attempted, but failed, to render popular; and Nidhámí of Ganja, whose name at least is tolerably familiar, but of whose "Five Treasures" or "Quintet" only one, the *Iskandar-náma*, has, I think, been translated into English, and that in a form which can hardly be described as attractive to the general reader.

There are, however, other Persian poets who rank far higher in the estimation of their countrymen than 'Umar Khayyám, yet whose very names are hardly known in Europe, save to such as make a special study of Persian, almost all of whom must be familiar with the two following pieces of doggerel criticism :—

در شعر سه تن پیمبرانند قولیست که جملگی بر آنند

فردوسی و انوری و سعدی هر چند که لَا نَبِیَّ بَعْدِی

"*The Sphere Poetic has its prophets three*
(This is a dogma on which all agree),
Firdawsi first, Sa'di, and Anwari,
Though Aḥmad said, 'No Prophet after me!'"

And again :

دیوان ظهیرِ فاریابی ' در کعبه بدُزّد اگر بیابی '

"'*Steal the Díwán of Dhahír of Fáryáb, even if you find it in the Ka'ba.*"

Here, then, are two poets, Anwarí and Dhahír, whose eminent merits are proverbial amongst their countrymen,

yet whose works are not much more familiar in the East than are their names in the West. Naturally one wishes to know why this is the case, and whether, given another FitzGerald, these poets might, like 'Umar Khayyám (whom neither of them would, in all probability, have reckoned as a fellow-artist at all), become household names throughout Europe and America. Curiosity on this point has led me so far as to read through the greater part of Anwarí's poems, and the whole of those of Dhahír of Fáryáb; and I am bound to admit that, especially in the case of the latter, the time spent in so doing might have been both more pleasantly and more profitably employed. Both are masters of their craft, but their craft is not what we understand by poetry.

Poetry, as understood in Western Asia, is to a large extent a question of forms rather than of ideas. The common definition lays down three qualifications which it must possess, viz., metre, rhyme, and intention on the part of the composer to produce verse. The last clause of this definition must be regarded as inspired by theological influences; for prose may be simple, metrical, or rhymed, and rhymed prose (of which, to a large extent, the Qur'án consists) may easily fall, here and there, into metre, as in verses 78–79 of the second *súra* of the Qur'án :—

ثُمَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ وَ أَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ ' ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ تَقْتُلُونَ '

which falls into the metre called *ar-Ramal al-musaddasu'l-maḥdhúf*, or the "apocopated hexameter Ramal." Now the Prophet's enemies were wont to describe him as a "mad poet," and in refutation of this assertion was revealed verse 69 of *súra* xxxvi :—"And We have not taught him (i.e. the Prophet) poetry, neither is it necessary for him: this is naught else than a Reminder, and a perspicuous Qur'án" (or Lection). Therefore since, on Divine authority, the Qur'án is not poetry, the definition of poetry must be so framed as to exclude the Qur'án or any part thereof; hence the addition, at first sight strange enough, of the final clause concerning 'intention.'

But Ibn Khaldún, that greatest philosophical historian of Islám (born in Tunis, A.D. 1332, died in Cairo, March, A.D. 1406), goes much further than this in his definition of Arabic poetry (for he expressly says that he does not enter into the question as to whether there exists in other languages anything which can properly be called poetry, or not). Having criticised the current definition of poetry, and declared a new one to be necessary, he says[1]: "Poetry is eloquent discourse based on metaphor and description, articulated into portions agreeing in metre and rime, each portion being independent, in respect to its object and purpose, of what precedes and follows it, and being cast in the moulds of the Arabs." On this last point he is very decisive: poetry, according to his view, can only be produced by one who has committed to memory an enormous quantity of classical Arabian verses, until the 'moulds' or 'models' (*asálíb*, pl. of *uslúb*) which underlie them become firmly fixed in his mind, and he is able to cast his thoughts in these moulds. Nor does he shrink from the obvious deduction from these premises, namely, that originality, especially as regards form, is a defect. "Such discourse as is versified," he says, "but not according to these models, is not poetry; and in view of this many of our masters in this branch of letters whom we have met consider that the verse of al-Mutanabbí and al-Ma'arrí is not poetry in any sense of the word . . . ." Yet these two, who flourished respectively in the tenth and eleventh centuries of our era, are unquestionably amongst the greatest, if not the greatest, of the post-classical Arabic poets. To this day al-Mutanabbí remains the most popular poet in literary circles in Egypt and Western Asia, while von Kremer, perhaps the greatest European authority on the Arabian civilisation in all its aspects, regards al-Ma'arrí as one of the greatest and most original literary geniuses whom the world has produced.

As regards Persian poetry the matter is not so clearly stated by any authority whom I have consulted, but that

[1] Beyrout (vocalized) edition of A.D. 1900, p. 573.

this idea of conformity to fixed standards is present is shown, not only by actual observation, but by the existence of such works as Sharafu'd-Dín Rámí's *Anísu'l-'Ushsháq*, or "Lovers' Companion,"[1] wherein the comparisons permitted to the writer of amatory verse are enumerated and classified with the utmost detail, and he is informed, for example, that he may compare the curving eyebrows of his mistress (1) to the crescent moon, (2) to a bow, (3) to the rainbow, (4) to a vaulted arch, (5) to the *miḥráb* or niche in a mosque, (6) to the letter *nún* (ن), (7) to a polo-stick, (8) to the *ṭughrá*, or royal monogram, imprinted on imperial rescripts and *farmáns*, and so forth. All this apparatus of simile and metaphor was taken over bodily by the Turks, who have never shown much originality in literary matters, but who, alone amongst Muhammadan nations, broke away some half-century ago from the old tradition, and, turning their backs on Persia, became the devoted disciples of the French. Yet these same similes, hackneyed as they now are, were once fresh and original. Many of them I have met with for the first time in the verses of Mu'izzí, the Poet-Laureate of Sanjar (died A.D. 1147), and it is for this reason, probably, that 'Awfí (vol. ii, p. 69 of my edition) remarks that "with him the child of Rhetoric reached maturity." In judging the work of these early poets we must bear in mind, if we are tempted to consider that they were overrated by their contemporaries, that though to us, who read our Sa'dí and our Ḥáfidh before ever we glanced at their verses, they may seem devoid of novelty, "the merit," as the Arabs say, "belongs to the pioneer" (اَلْفَضْلُ للمتقدّم), and that what appears stale enough now was once fresh and striking. Often, however, the later and more celebrated poet gets the credit. We are all familiar with 'Umar Khayyám's lines:—

> *"I often wonder what the vintners buy*
> *One half so precious as the stuff they sell";*

[1] Translated by M. Cl. Huart, Paris, 1875.

but few, even amongst Persian scholars, are aware that a century earlier Kisá'í had expressed nearly the same idea in the following verse:—

گل نعمتی است هدیه فرستاده از بهشت
مردم کریمتر شود اندر نعیم گل
ای گل فروش گل چه فروشی برای سیم
وز گل عزیزتر چه ستانی بسیم گل

"A heaven-sent gift and blessing is the rose,
Its grace inspireth aspirations high.
O flower-girl, why the rose for silver sell,
For what more precious with its price can'st buy?"

We must not, however, at present pursue further these general considerations on the Art of Poetry as cultivated in the Nearer East, but must, before proceeding to speak of Náṣir-i-Khusraw, make a few observations on the *qaṣída*, which is that form of verse which he, like Anwarí and Dhahír of Fáryáb, cultivated almost exclusively. I do not propose to discuss here the classical *qaṣída* of the Arabs, which was closely imitated by some of the earlier Persian poets, notably Minúchihrí, but the *qaṣída* in the forms which it quickly assumed in the hands of the Persians. It is always, as its name implies, a poem with a purpose; and according as its purpose is to praise an actual or prospective patron, to revile an enemy or rival, or one who, having been praised, did not respond with a liberality proportionate to the poet's expectations, or to enunciate the ethical, theological, or philosophical views of the writer, it is further classified as panegyric (*madḥ*), satire (*hajw*), doxology (*na'ṭ*), devotional (*munájját*), admonition (*naṣíḥat*), philosophical (*ḥikamiyya*), and so forth; while its panegyric forms are further subdivided, according to the nature of the *tashbíb*, or introductory portion, into 'vernal' (when they open with a description of the beauties of Spring),

'autumnal' (when they describe the Autumn season), and so forth. We have also the autobiographical *qaṣída*, or *tarjuma-i-ḥál*, under which must be classed the various *ḥabsiyyát*, or poems written in prison by poets who had been unfortunate enough to incur the wrath of their patrons (an event of pretty frequent occurrence), or, still worse, of those who had smarted under the shafts of their satire.

Here I must call attention to one rather curious fact, namely, that it is extremely rare for a Persian poet to excel in more than one form of verse. Thus, the three poets whom we have just mentioned, Anwarí, Dhahír of Fáryáb, and Náṣir-i-Khusraw were *par excellence* qaṣída-writers, and the few *ghazals* or odes produced by the first and second (for the last-named poet seems entirely to have avoided the ode) are of very mediocre quality. Firdawsí and Nidhámí, again, are essentially *mathnawí* poets, though the former, choosing the pure epic as his special province, is the more entirely objective in his treatment of his material. Many others besides 'Umar Khayyám wrote nothing but quatrains; while the reputation of Ḥáfidh rests exclusively on his odes, though his *Díwán* contains also a few quatrains, *qaṣídas*, and *mathnawís*. Of the great Persian poets Jámí alone, perhaps, can be said to have really excelled in more than one variety of verse, his allegorical *mathnawís* being as conspicuous for beauty as his lyrical poetry.

To return to the *qaṣída*-writers. For practical purposes these may be divided into two classes, the Court-poets, who were alternately panegyrists and satirists, and the Thought-poets, who were either religious enthusiasts, ethical teachers, or philosophers after their kind, or a combination in different proportions of all these things. These two great classes are utterly distinct, save when a disgusted and disappointed panegyrist renounced the pomps and vanities of courts, and retired in later life to the recluse's cell.

Let us first consider briefly the Court-poets, of whom Anwarí and Dhahír of Fáryáb may be regarded as typical. A careful study of their works is required to enable us to understand their craft (for it may be more properly described

as a craft than an art), and the light in which they themselves regarded it. These poets, in their occasional moments of frankness (which generally supervened on some rebuff or disappointment sustained at the hands of their patrons) are almost incredibly cynical as to their profession. Anwarí, it is said,[1] when a poor student at the Manṣúriyya College of Ṭús, was first led to devote his attention to poetry by seeing a gorgeously apparelled personage, mounted on a fine horse, pass by the gate of his college. Having enquired who this splendid creature might be, and being informed that he was one of the poets attached to Sanjar's Court, "What!" he exclaimed, "am I so poor when learning ranks so high, and is he so rich when the Art of Poetry is so base? By Heaven, from this day forth I will devote myself to Poetry, which is the least and lowest of my accomplishments!" Nor did his opinion of the poet's vocation improve as time went on, and he himself took rank as the first *qaṣída*-writer of his time. Thus he says (ed. Lucknow, A.D. 1880, p. 730):—

انوری شعر و حرص دانی چیست ' آن یکی طفل و آن دگر دایه '

"O Anwarí, dost thou know what poetry and covetousness are? The former is the child and the latter the nurse."

And again, in another outburst of disgust at the life of flattery and insincerity which his profession involved, he says (ed. Lucknow, p. 711):—

نشاید بهرِ آدابِ ندیمی ' دگر بر جان و دل زحمت نهادن '
زبان کردن بنظم ونثر جاری ' ز خاطر نکته‌های بکر زادن '
که باز آید همه نَارِ ندیمی ' بسیلی خوردن و دشنام دادن '

"It is not fitting, in order to conform to the courtier's code,
Again to expose my heart and soul to vexation;

[1] Dawlatsháh, pp. 83–86 of my edition.

To wag my tongue in prose or verse,
And bring forth virgin fancies from my mind;
For the whole business of courtiers comes to this—
To take blows and give abuse."

He is equally frank as to the motives which prompt him to praise this one or satirize that one. Thus he says (p. 629) :—

چو آبروی بیفزایدم بمدح و غزل ‘
چرا بآتشِ فکرت همی بکاهم روح ‘
بیاد بوک و مگر بیست سال بر دادم ‘
مرا خدای ندادست زندگانیٔ نوح ‘
عنانِ طبع ازین پس کشیده خواهم داشت ‘
اگر کشاده به بینم دَرِ قبول و فتوح ‘
وگر عطا ندهندم بر آرم از پسِ مدح ‘
بلفظِ هَجْو دمار از سرِ چنین ممدوح ‘

"Since my consideration can be increased by panegyric and ode,
Why should I waste my soul in the fire of thought?
I have thrown away twenty years in 'perhaps' and 'it may be';
God hath not granted me the life of Noah!
Henceforth I will rein in my natural disposition,
If I see the door of acceptance and success open before me;
And if they vouchsafe me no gift, I will, after essaying praise,
Crush with words of satire the head of such a patron!"

Dhahír is, if possible, more outspoken; for in one of his poems, after declaring, like Anwarí, that his poetic talent is his least claim to distinction, and that the ode, though a nobler form of verse than the *qaṣída* which he affects, "is not a stock-in-trade from which much gain can be hoped,"[1]

[1] زشعر جنس غزل بهترست آن هم نیست ‘
بضاعتی که بر آن ساختن توان بُنیاد ‘

concludes thus :—

بدین بسنده کن از حالِ مدح هیچ مگوی ،
که شرح دردِ دلِ آن نمی توانم داد ،
بهین گلی که مرا بشگفد ازو اینست ،
که بنده خوانم خودرا و سرورا آزاد ،
گهی لقب نهم آشفته زنگئی‌را حور ،
گهی خطاب کنم مست سفله‌را آزاد ،

"Be content with this much, and say naught concerning the nature of panegyric,
For I cannot describe the heartburnings to which it gives rise!
The finest flower which it yields to me is this,
That I call myself a 'slave' and the cypress-tree 'free';
Now I describe as a Houri of Paradise some fractious negro,
And now style 'noble' some miserable drunkard!"

And again, addressing a patron who had disappointed his expectations, he says :—

مباش غرّه اگرچه من از شمایلِ خویش ،
حکیم سیرت و نیکو نهاد و خاموشم ،
بکامِ نظم چو من بر سخن سوار شوم ،
گشَنند غاشیه اقران زفخر بر دوشم ،
بمدح همچو همه کس گوِ شکایت و شکر ،
چو آفتاب بتابم چو بحر بخروشم ،
من ار ز هَجْوِ تو بیتی دو بر کسی خوانم ،
نهند تختهٔ دُنّیا همی در آغوشم ،
بزرِّ سُرخ چو از من هجای تو بخرند ،
روا بُوَد که بنرخِ تمام نفروشم ،

"Be not misled if, in consequence of my virtues,
I remain philosophically calm, silent, and good-tempered.
When I mount my Pegasus, intent on the production of verse,
My colleagues are proud to carry my horse-cloths on their backs.
In praise, like all the rest of them, on occasions of complaint or thanksgiving,
I shine like the sun or rage like the sea.
If I should recite to a certain person a verse or two of satire on thee,
He would place in my embrace the whole expanse of earth.
Since, then, they are ready to buy satire of me for red gold,
Is it right that I should not sell at the best market price?"

And, to conclude this topic, while Anwarí declares (p. 41) that "begging is the poet's law," Dhahír exclaims:—

شعر در نفسِ خویشتن بد نیست ' نالهٔ من ز خسّتِ شُرَکَاست '

"Poetry is not bad in itself; my complaint is of the vileness of my colleagues!"

In a word, the Persian panegyrists, who constitute the bulk of the *qaṣída*-writers, if not of the whole Parnassus of Persian poets, were deliberately and consciously insincere, and never pretended to be anything else, taking, as it were, as their motto the cynical Arabic proverb: "The best poetry is that which contains most lies." They manufactured their poetry, as carpets or jewelry are manufactured, according to the most popular and fashionable patterns, in order to sell it in the best market at the highest price, and they cared no more who the buyer might be than does the carpet-maker or the jeweller. So Farrukhí aptly compares the laudatory poems which he composed in praise of the Amír Abu'l-Mudhaffar of Chaghániyán before he set out to visit his court to "fabrics spun within the brain and woven in the heart"[1]—

[1] See my translation of the *Chahár Maqála*, pp. 59–60 of the *tirage-à-part*.

با کاروان حلّه برفتم ز سیستان ٬ با حلّه تنیده ز دل بافته ز جان ٬

while Dhahír says:—

من نه دهقانم نه بازرگان که باشد مر مرا ٬
خانه‌ها پُر گندم و چو کیسه‌ها پُر سیم و زر ٬

"I am not a landowner nor a merchant, that I should have Granaries full of corn or purses filled with gold and silver."

Now all this is remote from our conception of poetry; for I suppose we should all agree that, presupposing a certain dignity and elegance of form, and some conformity to the laws of metre and rime, the essential quality of good poetry is sincerity. Whether the poet reflects our own views is a minor consideration; and we may equally admire the Anarchism of Shelley, the Cynicism of Byron, the Mysticism of Wordsworth, the Nationalism of Thomas Moore, or the Imperialism of Kipling, because all these sang as they believed, primarily to satisfy their own aspirations, and only in a secondary degree to please their audience. And because Anwarí, Dhahír of Fáryáb, and the whole class of Persian poets whom they represent, down to Qá'ání in our own age, are utterly and deliberately insincere, and never pretend to be anything else, it is, in my opinion, inconceivable that any translator, no matter how skilful, could ever render their poems (with a few such brilliant exceptions as Anwarí's "Tears of Khurásán") even tolerable to the European reader, seeing that their whole beauty lies in a technical skill and verbal artifice which it requires long study to appreciate, and which it is hardly possible to reproduce in a translation.

It has been my fortune (or misfortune) to edit two large *Tadhkiras* or Biographies of Persian poets, one, that of 'Awfí, the most ancient, and another, that of Dawlatsháh, the most popular, which have come down to our time. I have transcribed and collated these from end to end, read through in proof each portion time after time, and consulted, for

critical purposes, a mass of cognate literature; so that I may claim to have a fair general knowledge of the character of the work produced by most of the more notable Persian poets; and though here and there, in the work of many of them, gems of beauty may be found (for not even a Court-poet can be always consistently insincere), I am bound to admit that there are comparatively few, beyond the five or six mentioned in the beginning of this paper, whose poems, save in exceptional instances, could be rendered popular in Europe, even by the most skilful translator. One of these few, as I believe, is the poet of whom I am now about to speak.

Náṣir-i-Khusraw, the poet in question, presents himself to us under three different aspects: as a traveller, who has left us a most valuable account of his extensive journeys through Persia, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Arabia, and Baḥrayn; as one of the most active and devoted *dá'is*, propagandists or missionaries of the Isma'ílí sect; and as a poet equally remarkable for sincerity, power, and eloquence. Ignored by most historians and biographers on account of his heretical doctrines, and credited with all manner of magical powers and strange adventures by a fearful and credulous posterity, a mass of legend has grown up around him, and obscured a personality of extraordinary interest and originality, which only his own works, to wit, his *Safar-náma*, or Book of Travel, and his *Díwán* of poems and other poetical works, really reveal. Already in al-Qazwíní's *Áthárú'l-Bilád*, or "Monuments of the Lands" (ed. Wüstenfeld, pp. 338–9), composed in the first half of the thirteenth century, only about a hundred and fifty years after Náṣir-i-Khusraw's death, he is represented as a King of Balkh, driven by his rebellious subjects to take refuge in the strongly fortified town of Yumgán (the place where, as repeated allusions in his own poems show, he actually spent in religious retirement the latter days of his life), and there surrounding himself with marvellous buildings, strange automata which it was dangerous to look on for fear of losing one's reason, and all manner of awful talismans and

magical contrivances. Two or three centuries later, so far as can be judged, was produced the still more wonderful pseudo-autobiography, which in the East still passes current as the most authentic account of Náṣir-i-Khusraw. This pseudo-autobiography, which has been analysed and criticised by Schefer, Ethé, and other eminent Persian scholars, occurs in at least three different recensions of varying length and wealth of detail, one of which is prefixed to the Tabríz edition of the *Díwán*, while the greater part of it is given in a French translation in M. Schefer's Introduction (pp. viii–xvii) to his edition of the *Safar-náma*. In it, besides the wildest anachronisms and confusion of persons, we find yet more extraordinary legends, in which astrology and demonology play a large part; and the pseudo-autobiography does not even stop at Náṣir's death, but describes how his funeral obsequies are conducted by the *jinnís*. Some of the incidents narrated are evidently garbled accounts, greatly embellished by legends and fairy-tales, of events which really happened to other persons, with whom, on account of a similarity in names, or for some other reason, Náṣir-i-Khusraw has been confused. One episode, for instance, describes how he was detained by the "King of the Heretics" in Mázandarán on account of his reputation as a philosopher and man of learning; how, utterly against his will, he was compelled to write a Commentary on the Qur'án, explaining it in a sense favourable to the opinions of the 'Heretics'; and how this Commentary, penetrating to other parts of Persia, was the source of much further trouble to him, after he had effected his escape from the unwelcome hospitality of the 'Heretics' by thaumaturgical means, involving the destruction of their army. I have no doubt that this legend is a distorted recollection of what really happened to the philosopher and astronomer Naṣíru'd-Dín Túsí, who was actually detained as an unwilling guest by the 'Heretics' or Assassins,[1] and who actually dedicated to their last Grand

[1] The term *Malá*ḥ*ida* ('Heretics') is, so far as I know, only employed to denote the Assassins, not the parent sect of the Isma'ílís from which they were evolved by the genius of Ḥasan-i-Ṣabbáḥ, who was the *Dá'i'd-Du'át*, or Chief

Master, Ruknu'd-Dín Khúrsháh (subsequently betrayed by him to the Mongols), his celebrated Treatise on Ethics, the *Akhláq-i-Náṣirí*; a fact for which he apologizes in the later edition. It would even be possible, I think, with some trouble, to trace out the origins of most of the garbled narratives which, jumbled together, make up the Pseudo-Autobiography.

Though historically worthless, the Pseudo-Autobiography has a certain literary merit which has secured and maintained its popularity, and has rendered the imaginary Náṣir-i-Khusraw a much more familiar figure than the real one. Some of its incidents are delightful, even fraught with a certain grim humour. Amongst others, it is narrated that Náṣir-i-Khusraw and his brother, after escaping from Mázandarán as described above, came in the course of their further travels to Níshápúr, on arriving at which city they sent a young disciple who accompanied them to buy provisions in the market, while they went to a cobbler's shop to get their shoes repaired. While they were waiting there, a loud clamour and outcry arose from a neighbouring quarter, and the cobbler, still holding his awl in his hand, ran off to see what was the cause of the disturbance. After a while he returned, carrying on the point of his awl a piece of flesh. "What," enquired Náṣir-i-Khusraw, who was still patiently waiting for his shoes, "was the cause of the disturbance, and what is that piece of flesh?" "Well," replied the cobbler, "it appears that one of the disciples of that arch-heretic Náṣir-i-Khusraw appeared in this city, and fell into discussion on matters of religion with certain of our doctors. When they brought against him verses of the Qur'án, traditions of the Prophet, and sayings of godly divines, he opposed them with the infidel opinions and blasphemous poems of his master, until, perceiving his obstinacy to be incurable, the people tore him limb from limb, and I too, for the sake of earning merit, tore from his

of the Propaganda, in North and North-East Persia, next but one after Náṣir-i-Khusraw. To connect the older Isma'ílís, to whom Náṣir-i-Khusraw belonged, with the *Malāḥida* properly so called, is, therefore, an anachronism.

body this piece of flesh which you see on my awl." Then Náṣir-i-Khusraw rose up and said, "Give me my shoes as they are, for it is not good to tarry, even for an hour, in a city where even the name of Náṣir-i-Khusraw is mentioned!"

Now the collected poems of Náṣir-i-Khusraw are remarkable not only for their sincerity but for their devoutness, though their devoutness is that of a heretical Isma'ílí, not of an orthodox Sunní Muhammadan. Yet these poems are little read, and nine out of ten more or less well-read Persians, if asked to repeat some of his verses, will cite one or other of three scraps of poetry, all more or less blasphemous, in that they scoff at the Resurrection of the Body in the coarsest fashion, and reproach the Creator with having exposed man to temptations without giving him the power to resist them, and having created a Devil without any sufficient reason. These three poems are absent from the only edition of Náṣir-i-Khusraw's poetical works which I possess, and, though I have found them in one of the British Museum manuscripts, their authenticity must, I think, be regarded as doubtful. At any rate, if genuine, we must suppose that they were composed before the poet's conversion, that is, during the first forty years of his life, while all the poems contained in the lithographed edition of the Díwán appear to have been written after his return from Egypt, that is, after his fiftieth year.

So much for the legendary Náṣir-i-Khusraw: now for the real one. The first authentic mention I find of him by any Persian historian of repute occurs in the *Jámi'u't-Tawáríkh* of Rashídu'd-Dín Faḍlu'llah (British Museum MS. Add. 7628, ff. 286[a] and 290[a]), composed about the beginning of the fourteenth century.

"Náṣir-i-Khusraw," says this great historian of the Mongols, "attracted by the fame of al-Mustanṣir, came from Khurásán to Egypt, where he abode seven years, performing the Pilgrimage and returning to Egypt each year. Eventually, after performing his [final] pilgrimage, he came to Baṣra, and so returned to Khurásán, where he carried on a Propaganda for the 'Alawí (or Fáṭimid) Caliphs

of Egypt in Balkh. His enemies attempted to destroy him, and he became a fugitive in the highlands of Simingán, where he remained for twenty years, content to subsist on water and herbs." And immediately afterwards the historian proceeds to speak of the notorious Ḥasan-i-Ṣabbáḥ, who also visited the Anti-Caliph al-Mustanṣir in Cairo at a somewhat later date.

In another passage in the same work, Ḥasan-i-Ṣabbáḥ, according to a statement with which he himself is credited, was converted from the "Sect of the Twelve," or ordinary Shí'ite doctrine, to the "Sect of the Seven," or 'Esoteric' doctrine of the Isma'ílís, through the influence of an Isma'ílí propagandist named Amír Ḍarráb, "and before him," adds the historian, "Náṣir-i-Khusraw, 'the Proof' (*Ḥujjat*) of Khurásán."

At this point I must allude briefly to a theory maintained by several very eminent Orientalists, notably by my most learned predecessor, the late Professor Rieu, that there were two Náṣir-i-Khusraws, having the same name and the same *kunya* or cognomen, Abú Mu'ín, and whose fathers were also homonymous; of whom one was the poet, philosopher, and magician, and the other the traveller. This view, quite disproved, as I think, by Schefer and Ethé, was maintained by Pertsch and Fagnan, but is most forcibly and clearly enunciated by Professor Rieu in the following words:—

"A few facts," says this great scholar,[1] "will show that we have to do with two distinct persons. Ḥakím Náṣir, as the poet is generally called, was born in Iṣfahán, traced his pedigree to the great Imám 'Alí b. Músá ar-Riḍá, and was known as a poet before the composition of the present work [i.e. the *Book of Travel* or *Safar-náma*]; his poem, the *Rawshaná'i-náma*, is dated A.H. 420 (= A.D. 1029; see Pertsch, *Gotha Catalogue*, p. 13; the date A.H. 343 = A.D. 954–5, assigned to the same work in the Leyden copy, *Catalogue*, vol. ii, p. 108, is probably erroneous). Our author, on the contrary, designates himself by two *nisbas* which

[1] *Catalogue of the Persian MSS. in the British Museum*, pp. 379–381.

point to Qúbádiyán, a town near Balkh, and to Merv, as the places of his birth and of his usual residence, and lays no claim either to noble extraction or to any fame but that of a skilled accountant. Ḥakím Náṣir was born, according to the *Ḥabību's-siyar* (Bombay ed., vol. ii, *juz'* 4, p. 67), in A.H. 358 (= A.D. 969), or, as stated in the *Dabistán* (vol. ii, p. 419), in A.H. 359 (= A.D. 970), while our author appears, from his own statement, to have been forty years old in A.H. 437 (= A.D. 1045–6)."

Other difficulties have been raised as to the identification of the poet and traveller, but nearly all of them arise from the inaccuracies of late writers, and are speedily resolved by an attentive perusal of the *Safar-náma* and the *Díwán* side by side. Thus the traveller, as well as the poet, seems to have been entitled *Ḥakím* ('the sage'), for the voice from the unseen which reproaches him in his dream for his hitherto heedless and ungodly life (*Safar-náma*, p. 3) says to him, when he defends his indulgence in wine, "Insensibility and intoxication are not refreshment; one cannot call him 'the sage' (*Ḥakím*) who encourages men to lose their senses." Dawlatsháh,[1] who is notoriously inaccurate, is responsible for the statement that the poet was a native of Isfahán (one of Professor Rieu's points of differentiation), but this statement is conclusively disproved by the poet's own words (*Díwán*, ed. Tabríz, A.H. 1280, p. 241):—

گرچه مرا اصل خراسانیست ' از پس پیرئ و مهئ و سری '

دوستئ عترت وخانهٔ رسول ' کرد مرا یمگی و مازندری '

"*Although I am originally a native of Khurásán, after* [*enjoying*] *spiritual leadership, authority, and supremacy, Love for the Family and House of the Prophet have made me a dweller in Yumgán and Mázandarán.*"

[1] p. 61, l. 6 of my edition.

And lastly, as regards the date of the poet's birth, we have, against the assertions of late works like the *Habíbu's-siyar* and the fantastic *Dabistán*, the poet's own explicit statement (to which Dr. Ethé, I think, first directed attention) that he was born in A.H. 394 = A.D. 1003–4 (*Díwán*, p. 110):—

بگذشت ز هجرت پس سیصد نود و چار
بنهاد مرا مادر بر مرکز اغبر

while, four lines lower down, he says that he was 42 years of age (given in a round number as 40 in the *Book of Travel*) when his conversion took place, or, as he puts it, "when his reasonable soul began to seek after wisdom":—

پیموده شد از گنبذ بر من چهل و دو
جویانِ خرد گشت مرا نفسِ سخنور[1]

The agreement, in short, between the data derived from the *Díwán* and those given in the *Book of Travel* is absolute; only the various wrong dates occurring in some manuscripts of the *Rawshaná'i-náma*, which Dr. Ethé has most carefully examined, criticised, and explained, raise any further difficulty, and the identity of Náṣir-i-Khusraw the poet, Náṣir-i-Khusraw the Isma'ílí missionary, and Náṣir-i-Khusraw the traveller may be regarded as established with as much certainty as any fact in Persian history of that period.

Briefly, his life may be said to fall quite clearly into three periods. Of the first, the period of forty years which preceded his travels, we know little, save that, as already mentioned, he was born in A.H. 394 (= A.D. 1003–4) at Qúbádiyán by the Oxus, and that in A.H. 437 (= A.D. 1045), being then in the service of the recently established Seljúq government as a secretary and auditor of some considerable repute, and aged about 42 or 43 years, he was moved by

[1] Evidently سخنور is here used as the equivalent of the Arabic ناطق, i.e. 'logical.'

a somewhat startling and vivid dream to resign his post, and set off on the seven years' wanderings which he describes in his *Book of Travel*. The chief result of this journey was his conversion to the Isma'ílí doctrine at Cairo, where al-Mustanṣir, the spiritual and temporal Pontiff of the 'Esoterics,' or "Sect of the Seven," was then ruling with a justice, mildness, and benevolence which filled our poet with such admiration and devotion as never left him during the remainder of his long life (in two of his poems, *Díwán*, pp. 166, 171, he alludes to his age as being 62 at the time of writing), and served to inspire much of the finest of his verse.

The second period of the poet's life, that of his travels, lasted seven years, viz., from December 19, A.D. 1045, until October 23, A.D. 1052 (6 Jumáda II, A.H. 437, until 26 Jumáda II, A.H. 444). The greater part of this time was spent in Egypt, but inasmuch as his journey thither and his return thence were both leisurely and circuitous, the above-mentioned assertion in the *Jámi'u't-Tawáríkh*, that he actually spent seven years in that country, and performed the pilgrimage to Mecca thence every year, is incorrect. As a matter of fact, in his *Safar-náma* he only describes five pilgrimages, the first on his way to Egypt from Syria in the Spring of A.D. 1047, and the fifth on his homeward journey in A.D. 1052. He therefore remained in Egypt only for the inside of this period of four years.

Time does not permit me to describe this journey of our poet, and it is unnecessary to do so, since the late M. Schefer's French translation of the *Book of Travel* is readily accessible to all. He was an intelligent and observant traveller, and the value of his Travels, not merely from the geographical point of view, but also as throwing light on many interesting persons and customs of that time, has long been recognized. At Ma'arratu'n-Nu'mán, in Syria, for example, he visited the great poet-pessimist-philosopher of the Arabs, Abu'l-'Alá al-Ma'arrí, of whom he has left us a well-considered eulogy. At Tabríz, again, somewhat earlier in his journey, he made the acquaintance of the Persian poet Qaṭrán, of whose knowledge of the older

Persian literature he apparently thought somewhat meanly. At Samnán he attended one of the lectures on Mathematics and Natural Science of a certain Ustád 'Alí Nasá'í, who aroused his contempt by the manner in which he strove to mask the exiguity of his attainments by repeated references to the fact that he had once been a pupil of the great Avicenna. And lastly we owe to him one of the most sympathetic and appreciative notices of the just and tolerant rule of the Fáṭimids in Egypt which has been preserved to us. He was especially impressed by the discipline of the army, some 215,000 strong, which comprised troops from all parts of North Africa, Bedouins from the Ḥijáz, Turks, Persians, a slave-regiment, and a mercenary Foreign Legion. The wealth of the *bázárs* filled him with astonishment, still more the high degree of public security, which, he says, was such that the merchants and tradesmen did not deem it necessary to lock up their shops and warehouses. "All feel secure in the justice of the King," he says (p. 53 of the text), "neither have they any fear of myrmidons or spies, by reason of their confidence that he will oppress no one and covet no one's wealth"; and from an anecdote which follows this observation, it appears that Christians had equal confidence with Muslims in the justice of the Fáṭimid Government.

It was, of course, during his stay in Egypt that Náṣir-i-Khusraw was initiated into the esoteric doctrines of the Isma'ílís (so graphically described by de Sacy in the Introduction to his *Exposé de la Religion des Druzes*, and so well illustrated by Stanislas Guyard in his *Fragments relatifs à la Doctrine des Ismaélis*), and that he was commissioned, under the title of "the Proof of Khurásán" (*Ḥujjat-i-Khurásán*), to carry on their propaganda in Persia. It is by this title, *Ḥujjat*, that he commonly refers to himself in his poems, but it is not a mere *takhalluṣ* or *nom de guerre*, since it denotes a real and definite rank, comparable to that of a bishop, in the Isma'ílí hierarchy.

Náṣir-i-Khusraw's works were numerous, as he himself says in his *Díwán*:—

اندیشه مـر مرا شَجَرِ خوب بـرورست ،
پـرهیز و علم ریـزد ازو بـرگ و بـر مرا ،
گر بایدت همی کـه به بینی مرا تمام ،
چون عاقلان بچـشـمِ بصیرت نگر مرا ،
منگر بدین ضعیف تنم زآنکه در سخن ،
زین چرخِ پُر ستاره فزون‌است اثر مرا ،

" My mind with its meditations is a fair and fruitful tree,
Which yieldeth its fruit and blossom of knowledge and chastity.
Would'st thou see me complete and whole? Then look, as beseems the wise,
At my essence and not my seeming, with keen and discerning eyes.
This feeble frame regard not; remember rather that I
Am the author of works which outnumber and outshine the stars in the sky."

Of these works, besides the *Safar-náma* and the *Díwán*, the *Rawshaná'i-náma*, or "Book of Light," has been edited in the original Persian and translated into German by Dr. Ethé (*Z.D.M.G.*, 1879–1880, vol. xxxiii, pp. 645–665, and vol. xxxiv, pp. 428–468 and 617–642), while the *Sa'ádat-náma*, or "Book of Felicity," has been edited with a French translation by M. Fagnan (*Z.D.M.G.*, vol. xxxiii, pp. 643–674), and the *Zádu'l-Musáfirín*, or "Pilgrims' Provision," exists in manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale. These five books, so far as I know, are all of our poet's works which have survived to our days. To the *Díwán* I have devoted the most careful attention, having read it attentively from cover to cover; and I append to this article verse-translations of a hundred couplets, selected from the first five *qaṣídas* (i.e. the first ten pages of the Tabríz edition), which, however much they may fall short of the original, will, I think, suffice to convince anyone who is at all familiar with Persian poetry, and especially Persian *qaṣídas*, how unique is Náṣir-i-

Khusraw in his sincerity, his directness, his boldness, his simplicity of language, his freedom from the verbal conceits so dear to most Persian poets, his contempt for flattery and time-serving, and his complete devotion to the Esoteric Doctrines which he had embraced with such fervour. These doctrines are apparent everywhere, and are wholly and typically Isma'ílian, especially as regards the exaltation of the practice of allegorical interpretation of Scripture (*ta'wíl*) which is so characteristic of the *Bátini* or Esoteric sect. Without this, says Náṣir-i-Khusraw, the letter of scripture is bitter as brine (p. 3 of the Tabríz edition) and misleading as water running under straw. Heaven, Hell, the Resurrection, the Torment of the Tomb, the Rising of the Sun from the West, and the appearance of Antichrist are all allegorically explained, and such explanation is declared to be of the very essence of true spiritual religion (p. 33), but the key to it has been committed by God only to His chosen representative, the Imám of the Prophet's Family (pp. 12, 30, 60, 64, 124, 142), who is its sole custodian (p. 4), and the only channel whereby access can be obtained to this hidden science. Revelation is necessary (p. 29), but the nobility of the Arabic language is solely due to the fact that it was the medium of this Revelation (p. 249); and mere parrot-like reading of the Qur'án is useless (p. 214). Piety, without knowledge and understanding, avails nothing (p. 37), but Knowledge, great as is its honour, is but the handmaid of Religion (pp. 150, 235), which is the fragrance of the world (p. 188). There exists naught but God (p. 193), who can neither be described as Eternal nor Temporal (p. 166), since He is above all description. Phenomena are but an illusory reflection of Him (p. 106), yet are full of significance (p. 197), because the Universal Intelligence is immanent in them (p. 14), while Man is the Microcosm (p. 232). Space and Time are infinite and unbounded, and the Heavens will not perish (p. 4), yet is the World not eternal (pp. 12, 39, 40).

The Doctrine of Free-Will is strongly enunciated by Náṣir-i-Khusraw. Thus he says, amongst many similar passages (p. 56):—

گرچه یزدان آفریند مادر و پستان و شیر ،
کودکان‌را شیرِ مادر خود همی باید مکید ،

" Though God creates the mother, and the breast, and the milk,
The children must draw for themselves the mother's milk."

And again (p. 149) :—

ترا جانّت نامه‌است کردار خط ، بجان بر مکن جز به نیکی رقم ،
بنامه درون جمله نیکی نویس ، که در دستِ تست ای برادر قلم ،

" Thy soul is a book, thy deeds are like the writing : write not
on thy soul aught else but a fair inscription :
Write what is wholly good in the book, O brother, for the pen
is in thine own hand !"

The Fáṭimid Caliphs, or Anti-Caliphs of Cairo, are throughout regarded as the only legitimate rulers, and the keepers of the Garden of God, but a gate (*Báb*) to the Imám is to be found in every country. Allusions to the mystic number Seven are frequent, and also to the characteristic Isma'ílí doctrine of the *Asás*.

Lastly, we may notice Náṣir-i-Khusraw's profound contempt for courts (p. 6), courtiers (pp. 151, 230), panegyrists (pp. 7, 11, 80, 141, 144), elegant writers and literary triflers (p. 228), and writers of *ghazals* and erotic poetry (pp. 108, 141, 145, 171).

Text and Verse Translation of a Hundred Couplets taken from the first five poems of Náṣir-i-Khusraw's Díwán.

(I)

دریای سخنها سخنِ خوب خدایست ،
پر گوهر و یاقوت پُر از لؤلؤ لالا ،
شورست چو دریا بمثل ظاهرِ تنزیل ،
تأویل چو لؤلؤست سوی مردم دانا ،
اندر بُنِ دریاست همه گوهر و لؤلؤ ،
غوّاص طلب کن چه دَوِی بر لبِ دریا ،
اندر بُنِ شوراب ز بهر چه نهادست ،
چندین گُهر و لؤلؤ ارزندهٔ زیبا ،
از بهرِ پیمبر که بدین صُنع ورا گفت ،
تأویل بدانا ده و تنزیل بغوغا ،
غوّاصِ ترا جز گِلِ شورابه ندادست ،
زیراک ندیدست از تو جُز که مُعادا ،
معنی طلب از ظاهرِ تنزیل چو مردم ،
خورسند مشو همچو خر از قول بآوا ،

* * * * * *

دارا که هزاران خدم و خیل و حشم داشت ،
بگذاشت همه پاک و بشُد با تنِ تنها ،

بازیست رُباینده زمانه که نیابد ،
زو خلق رها هیچ نه مولا و نه مولا ،
آن روز بیابند همه خلق مکافات ،
هم ظالم و هم عادل بی هیچ مُحابا ،
آن روز در آن حول و فزع بر سرِ آن جمع ،
پیشِ شُهَدا دستِ من و دامنِ زهرا ،
تا دادِ من از دشمنِ اولادِ پیمبر ،
بدهد بتمام ایزدِ دادارِ تعالی ،

(۲)

چگونه کند با قرار آسمانت ،
چو خود نیست از بُن قرار آسمان‌را ،
سر آن جهان نردبان این جهانست ،
بسر بر شُدت باید این نردبان‌را ،
دریں بامِ گردان و آن بامِ ساکن ،
ببین صنعت و حکمتِ غیب دان‌را ،
نگه کن که چون کرد بی هیچ حاجت ،
بجانِ سَبُک جُفّت جسمِ گران‌را ،
که آویخته‌ست اندریں سبز گنبذ ،
مر ایں تیره گوی درشت کلان‌را ،
چه گوئی که فرساید این چرخِ گردان ،
چو بیحدّ و مر بشمرد سالیان‌را ،

نه فرسودنی ساختست این فلک‌را ،
نه آبِ روان و نه بادِ بزان‌را ،

* * * * * *

مکان و زمان هردو از بهرِ صنع است ،
ازین نیست حدّی زمین و زمان‌را ،
اگر گوئی این در قُران نیست گویم ،
همانا نکو می ندانی قران‌را ،
قران‌را یکی خازنی هست کایزد ،
حوالت بدو کرد مر انس و جان‌را ،

* * * * * *

تو بر آن گُزیدهٔ خدا و پیمبر ،
گُزیدی فلان و فلان و فلان‌را ،

* * * * * *

بمردم شود آب و نانِ تو مردم ،
نه بینی که سگ سگ کند آب و نان‌را ،

(۳)

گر بر قیاسِ فضل بگشتی مدارِ چرخ ،
جُز بر مقرِ ماه نبودی مقر مرا ،
نی نی که چرخ و دهر ندانند قدرِ فضل ،
این گفته بود گاهِ جوانی پدر مرا ،
دانش بِه از ضیاع و بِه از جاه و مال و ملک ،
این خاطر خطیر چنین گفت مر مرا ،

با خاطرِ منوّر و روشنتر از قمر ،
نآید بکار هیچ مقرّ قمر مرا ،
با لشکرِ زمانه و با تیغِ تیزِ قهر ،
دین و خِرَد بس است سپاه و سپر مرا ،

* * * * * *

اندیشه مر مرا شجرِ خوب بَرْوَرست ، ۳۰
پرهیز و علم ریزد ازو برگ و بر مرا ،
گر بایدت همی که به بینی مرا تمام ،
چون عاقلان بچشمِ بصیرت نگر مرا ،
منگر بدین ضعیف تنم زآنکه در سخن ،
زین چرخِ پُرستاره فزون‌است اثر مرا ،

* * * * * *

از هرچه حاجت است بدو مر مرا خدای ،
کردست بی نیاز درین رهگذر مرا ،
شُکْر آن خدای را که سوی علم ودین خویش ،
ره داد سوی رحمت و بکشاد در مرا ،
اندر جهان بدوستئ خاندان حقّ ، ۳۵
چون آفتاب کرد چنین مُشْتَهَر مرا ،

* * * * * *

ای ناکسِ نفایه تنِ من درین جهان ،
همسایهٔ نبود کس از تو بتر مرا ،
من دوستدار خویش گمان بُرْدمت همی ،
جز تو نبود یار ببَحْر و به بر مرا ،

بر من تو کینه‌ور شدی و دام ساختی ،
وز دامِ تو نبود اثر نه خبر مرا ،
تا مر مرا تو غافل و ایمن بیافتی ،
از مکر و غدرِ خویش گرفتی سخر مرا ،
گر رحمتِ خدای نبودی و فضلِ او ،
افگنده بود مکرِ تو در جوی و جر مرا ،
اکنون که شد دُرُشت که تو دشمن منی ،
نیز از دو دستِ تو نگوارد شکر مرا ،
خواب و خورست کارِ تو ای بیخرد جسد ،
لیکن خرد به است ز خواب و ز خور مرا ،
کارِ خرست سوی خردمند خواب و خور ،
ننگ است ننگ با خرد از کارِ خر مرا ،
من با تو ای جسد ننشینم درین سرای ،
کایزد همی بخواند بجای دگر مرا ،
آنجا هنر بکار و فضائل نه خواب و خور ،
پس خواب و خور ترا و خرد با هنر مرا ،
چون پیشِ من خلایق رفتند بیشمار ،
گرچه دراز مانم رفته شمر مرا ،
روزی بپرّ طاعت ازین گنبدِ بلند ،
بیرون پریده گیر چو مرغ بپر مرا ؛
هر کس همی حذر ز قضا و قدر کند ،
وین هر دو رهبرند قضا و قدر مرا ،

نامِ قضا خرد کن و نامِ قدر سخن ‘
یادست این سخن ز یکی نامور مرا ‘
و اکنون که عقل و نفسِ سخنگوی خود منم ‘
از خویشتن چه باید کردن حذر مرا ‘
ای گشته خوش دلت ز قضا و قدر بنام ‘
چون خویشتن ستور گمانی مبر مرا ‘
قَوْلِ رسولِ حق چو درختی است بَارْوَر ‘
برگش ترا که گاوی توئی و ثمر مرا ‘
چون برگخوار گشتی اگر گاو نیستی ‘
انصاف ده مگوی جفا و مخور مرا ‘
ای آنکه دینِ تو بخریدم بجان خویش ‘
از جورِ این گروهِ خران باز خر مرا ‘

(۴)

سلام کن ز من ای باد مر خراسان‌را ‘
مر اهلِ فضل و خردرا نه عام و نادان‌را ‘
خبر بیاور از ایشان بمن چو داده بُوی ‘
ز حالِ من بحقیقت خبر مر ایشان‌را ‘
بگویشان که جهان سَرْوِ من چو چنبر کرد ‘
بمکرِ خویش خود اینست کارگیهان‌را ‘
نگر که تان نکند غرّه عهد و پیمانش ‘
که او وفا نکند هیچ عهد و پیمان‌را ‘

* * * * * *

نگه کنند که در دستِ این و آن چو خراس ،
بچند گونه بدیدند مر خراسان‌را ،
بملکِ ترک چرا غرّه اید یاد کنید ،
جلال و دولتِ محمودِ زاولستان‌را ،
کجاست آنکه فریغونیان ز هیبتِ او ،
ز دستِ خویش بدادند گوزگانان‌را[1] ،
چو هندرا بسُمِ اسپ ترک ویران کرد ،
بپای پیلان بسپرد خاکِ ختلان‌را ،

* * * * * *

شما فریفتگان پیش او همی گفتید ،
هزار سال فزون باد عمر سلطان‌را ،
بفرِّ دولت او هرکه قصدِ سندان کرد ،
بزیرِ دندان چون موم یافت سندان‌را ،
پریر قبلهٔ احرار زاولستان بود ،
چنانکه کعبه‌است امروز اهل ایمان‌را ،
کجاست اکنون آن مرد و آن جلالت وجاه ،
که زیرِ خویش همی دید بُرجِ سرطان‌را ،
بریخت چنگش و فرسوده گشت دندانش ،
چو تیز کرد برو مرگ چنگ و دندان‌را ،

[1] Text کورکانان‌را, but 'Utbí speaks of Júzján as more particularly the appanage of these kings, and I imagine that we have here the Persian form of this name.

بترس سخت ز سختی چو کار آسان شد ‘
که چرخ زود کند سخت کار آسان‌را ‘
برون کند چو در آمد بچشم گشت زمان ‘
ز قصر قیصررا وز خان و مان خان‌را ‘
بر آسمان ز کسوفِ بیَه رهایش نیست ‘
مر آفتابِ درفشان و ماهِ تابان‌را ‘
ز چیزهای جهان هرچه خوار و ارزان شد ‘
گران شده شمر آن چیز خوار و ارزان‌را ‘
میانه کاری باش ای پسر کمال مجوی ‘
که مه تمام نشد جُز ز بهر نقصان‌را ‘

* * * * * *

اگر شرابِ جهان خلق‌را چو مستان کرد ‘
توشان رها کن چون هوشیار مستان‌را ‘
نگاه کن که بحیلت همی هلاک کنند ‘
ز بهر پرِّ نکو طاوسانِ پرّان‌را[1] ‘

* * * * * *

[1] Compare a very similar passage in Book i of the *Mathnawí* of Jalálu'd-Dín Rúmí (ed. 'Alá'u'd-Dawla, lith. Ṭihrán, A.H. 1299, p. 6, ll. 21–23) :—

خون دوید از چشم همچون جوی او ‘ دشمن جان وی آمد روی او ‘
دشمن طاؤس آمد پرِّ او ‘ ای بسا شه‌را بکشته فرّ او ‘
گفت من آن آهُوَم کز ناف من ‘ ریخت آن صیّاد خون صاف من ‘
ای من آن روباه صحرا کز کمین ‘ سر بریدندم برای پوستین ‘
ای من آن پیلی که زخم پیلبان ‘ ریخت خونم از برای استخوان ‘

۷۵ ترا تنِ تو چو بندست و این جهان زندان ،
مقرِ خویش مپندار بند و زندان را ،
ز علم و طاعت جانت ضعیف و عریان است ،
بعلم کوش و بپوش این ضعیفِ عریان را ،

* * * * * *

جهان زمین و سخن تخم و جانت دهقانست ،
بکشتّ باید مشغول بود دهقان را ،

* * * * * *

ترا کنون که بهارست جهدِ آن نکنی ،
که نانکی بکف آری مگر زمستان را ،

* * * * * *

ز عمر بَهْرَه همین گشت مر مرا که بشعر ،
برشته میکشم این زر و دُرّ و مرجان را ،

(۵)

۸۰ شاید اگر نیست بر درِ مَلِکی ، جُز بدرِ کردگار بار مرا ،
بار نخواهم سوی کسی که کند ، منّتِ او پشت زیرِ بار مرا ،

* * * * * *

خواندن قُرّان و زهد وعلم وعمل ، مونسِ جانند هر چهار مرا ،
چشم و دل و گوش هر یکی همه شب ، پند دهد با تنِ نزار مرا ،
چشم همی گوید از حرام و حرم ، بسته همی دار زینهار مرا ،

گوش همی گوید از محال و دروغ ' راه بکن سخت و استوار مرا '
دل چه کند گویدم همی ز هوا ' سخت نگه دار مَرْدوآر مرا '
عقل همی گویدم موکّل کرد ' بر تن و بر جانت کردگار مرا '
نیست ز بهرِ تو با سپاه هوا ' کار مگر حرب و کارزار مرا '
سر ز کمندِ خرد چگونه کشم ' فضلِ خرد داد بر حمار مرا '
دیو همی بست بر قطار سرم ' عقل برون کرد از آن قطار مرا '
گرنه خرد بستدی مهارم ازو ' دیو کشان کرده بُد مهار مرا '
غار جهان گرچه تنگ و تار شدست ' عقل بسنده است یارِ غار مرا '
هیچ مکن ای پسر ز دهر گله ' کزوی شُکْرست صد هزار مرا '
هست بدو گشتم و زبان و سخن ' هر دو بدین گشت پیشکار مرا '
دهر همی گویدت که بر سفرم ' تنگ بکش سخت در کنار مرا '

* * * * * *

پیشرَوَم عقل بود تا بجهان ' کرد بحکمت چنین مُشار مرا '
بر سرِ من تاجِ دین نهاده خرد ' دین هُنَری کرد و بردبار مرا '

* * * * * *

چون نکنم جان فدای آنکه بحشر ' آسان گردد بدو شمار مرا '
لا جرم اکنون جهان شکارِ منست ' گرچه همی داشت او شکار مرا '
گرچه همی خلقرا فگار کند ' کرد نیارد جهان فگار مرا '
جان من از روزگار برتر شد ' بیم نیاید ز روزگار مرا '

No. 1 (pp. 2–4 of Tabríz ed.).

God's gracious Word in truth is an Ocean of Words, I ween,
Teeming with gems and jewels and pearls of luminous sheen;
Bitter to outward seeming, like the sea, is the Scripture's page,
But precious as pearls of price is the Inward Sense to the sage.
Down in the depths of the Ocean are gems and pearls galore;
Seek, then, a skilful diver, and bid farewell to the shore.
Wherefore hath God bestowed in the depths of the Ocean's brine
All these pearls of price and jewels so rare and fine?
Wherefore if not for the Prophet, who made the Inward Sense
The portion of Wisdom's children, but the Letter a Rock of Offence?
A handful of salt-stained clay hath the diver offered to thee
Because in thy heart he beheld but envy and enmity.
Strive from the Outward Form to the Inward Sense to win
Like a man, nor rest content like an ass with a senseless din.

* * * * *

Darius, for all his thousands of servants and thanes, alone
Had to depart and abandon the chattels he deemed his own.
For the World is a thievish game, from which no man may save
Himself, be he Sultan or subject, his goods, be he master or slave.
That is the day when all men the guerdon they've earned shall win;
The just the fruits of his justice, the tyrant his wage of sin.
In the sight of the holy martyrs, in the midst of that fierce dismay,
Will I grasp the garment of Zahrá[1] on that fearful Judgment Day,
And God, the Judge Almighty, shall avenge to the full the woes
I have suffered so long at the hands of the House of the Prophet's foes.

No. 2 (pp. 4–5).

How can the Heavens rest on thee bestow
When they themselves nor pause nor rest can know?
This world's the ladder to that world, O friend;
To mount, thou needs must climb it to the end.
In these two roofs, one whirling and one still,
Behold that Secret-knowing Power and Skill;
How, unconstrained, in one harmonious whole
He blended Matter gross and subtle Soul;

[1] "The Most Bright One," i.e. Fáṭima, the daughter of the Prophet, wife of 'Alí and mother of the Imáms.

How He did poise this dark stupendous sphere
In Heaven's hollow dome of emerald clear.
What say'st thou? "Endlessly recurring day
And month at last shall wear that dome away!"
Nay, for He hath exempted from such wear
The circling sky, the water and the air.
The Canvass of His Art is Time and Place;
Hence Time is infinite, and boundless Space.
Should'st thou object, "Not thus the Scriptures tell,"
I answer that thou hast not conned them well.
And o'er the Scriptures is a Guardian set
From whom both men and *jinn* must knowledge get.
God and His Prophet thus decreed: but no!
You "much prefer the views of So-and-so."
Thy meat in man begetteth human power;
To dog-flesh turns the meat that dogs devour.

No. 3 (pp. 5-7).

Were the turns of the Wheel of Fortune proportioned to worth alone,
O'er the Vault of the Lunar Heaven would have been my abode and throne.
But no! For the worth of Wisdom is lightly esteemed, in sooth,
By fickle Fate and Fortune, as my father warned me in youth.
Yet knowledge is more than farms, and estates, and rank and gold;
Thus my dauntless spirit whispering me consoled:
"With a heart more brightly illumined than ever the Moon can be
What were a throne of glory o'er the sphere of the Moon to thee?"
'Gainst the foeman's gleaming falchion and Fate's close-serried field
Enough for me are Wisdom and Faith as defence and shield.

* * * * *

My mind with its meditations is a fair and fruitful tree,
Which yieldeth its fruit and blossom of knowledge and chastity.
Would'st thou see me complete and whole? Then look, as beseems the wise,
At my essence and not my seeming, with keen and discerning eyes.
This feeble frame regard not; remember rather that I
Am the author of works which outnumber and outshine the stars in the sky.
God, to whose Name be Glory! me hath exempt and freed
In this troubled life of transit from the things that most men need.
I thank the Lord Almighty, who plainly for me did trace
The way to Faith and Wisdom, and opened the Door of Grace,

And who in His limitless Mercy in this world hath made me one
Whose love for the Holy Household is clear as the noonday sun!

* * * * *

O dark and ignoble body, never on earth have I seen
A fellow-lodger so hurtful as thee, or a mate so mean!
Once on a time my lover and friend I accounted thee,
And thou wert my chosen comrade in travel by land and sea.
But fellest of foes I found thee, spreading thy deadly snare
To entrap me, whilst I of thy scheming was heedless and unaware,
Till, finding me all unguarded, and free from all fear of guile,
You strove to take me captive by treachery base and vile.
And surely but for the Mercy of God, and His Gracious Will,
Thy rascally schemes had wrought me a great and enduring ill.
But not the sweetest nectar could tempt me now, for I know
What to expect at the hands of so fierce and deadly a foe.
Sleep, O senseless body, and food are thy only care,
But to me than these is Wisdom better beyond compare!
'T is the life of a brute, say the sages, to dream but of water and grass,
And shall I, who am dowered with reason, live the life of a soulless ass?
I will not dwell, O Body, with thee in this world of sense;
To another abode God calls me, and bids me arise from hence.
There are talent and virtue esteemed, not food and sleep;
Then enjoy thy food and slumber, and let me my virtue keep!
Ere me from their earthly casings uncounted spirits have fled,
And I, though long I linger, may be counted already dead.
Through the lofty vault of Ether with the wings of obedience I
One day shall soar to the heavens as the skylark soars to the sky.
Fearful of God's Fore-knowledge, quaking at God's Decree,
Is the mass of my fellow-creatures, yet these are as guides to me:
"Speak of the first as 'Reason,' call the latter 'the Word'"—
Such was the explanation that I from a wise man heard.
So being myself in essence a rational, logical Soul,
Why should I fear myself? Shall the Part be in fear of the Whole?
O man who dost rest contented to claim the Determinist's view,
Though you lack a brute's discernment must I lack discernment too?
The words of God's Apostle resemble a fruitful tree:
Mine be its fruits of wisdom, and its leaves for cows like thee!
Thou art not a cow, thou sayest? Then wherefore, Eater of Leaves,
Dost thou utter taunts and revilings whereat my spirit grieves?
O Thou for whose Holy Doctrine my life I freely gave,
Me from this herd of asses, I pray thee, redeem and save!

No. 4 (pp. 7–8).

Bear from me to Khurásán, Zephyr, a kindly word,
To its scholars and men of learning, not to the witless herd,
And having faithfully carried the message I bid thee bear,
Bring me news of their doings, and tell me how they fare.
I, who was once as the cypress, now upon Fortune's wheel
Am broken and bent, you may tell them: for thus doth Fortune deal.
Let not her specious promise you to destruction lure:
Ne'er was her covenant faithful; ne'er was her pact secure.

* * * * *

Look at Khurásán only: she is crushed and trodden still
By this one, and then by that one, as corn is crushed in the mill.
You boast of your Turkish rulers[1]: remember the power and sway
Of the Záwulí Sulṭán Maḥmúd[2] were greater far in their day.
The Royal House of Faríghún[3] before his might did bow,
And abandon the land of Júzján[4]: but where is Maḥmúd now?
'Neath the hoofs of his Turkish squadrons the glory of India lay,
While his elephants proudly trampled the deserts of far Cathay.

* * * * *

And ye, deceived and deluded, before his throne did sing:
"More than a thousand summers be the life of our lord the King!
"Who, on his might relying, an anvil of steel attacks,
"Findeth the anvil crumble under his teeth like wax!"
The goal of the best was Záwul, as it seems, but yesterday,
Whither they turned, as the faithful turn to Mecca to pray.
Where is the power and empire of that King who had deemed it meet
If the heavenly Sign of Cancer had served as a stool for his feet?

[1] I.e. the Seljúqs.

[2] I.e. Sulṭán Maḥmúd of Zábulistán, or Záwulistán, generally called "of Ghazna." He reigned A.D. 998–1030.

[3] I.e. the first dynasty of Khwárazmsháhs. "Faríghún," says Riḍá-qulí Khán in his Persian lexicon entitled *Farhang-i-anjuman-árá-yi-Náṣirí*, "rhyming with Farídún, was the name of a man who attained to the rule of Khwárazm, and whose children and grandchildren are called 'the House of Faríghún' or 'Afríghún.' These were the absolute rulers of Khwárazm, such as 'Alí b. Ma'mún Faríghúní, who was the contemporary of Sulṭán Maḥmúd of Ghazna (to whom he was related by marriage), and who was murdered by his own slaves. Sulṭán Maḥmúd came to Khwárazm and put the murderers to death." See also vol. ii, pp. 101–105 of the Cairo ed. (A.H. 1286) of al-'Utbí's monograph on Sulṭán Maḥmúd, entitled *at-Ta'rikhu'l-Yamíní*.

[4] The text has *Gúrgánán* (or *Kúrkánán*): the emendation is based on al-'Utbí (loc. cit.). Compare n. 1 on p. 343 *supra*.

Alas! grim Death did sharpen against him tooth and claw,
And his talons are fallen from him, and his teeth devour no more!

* * * * *

Be ever fearful of trouble when all seems fair and clear,
For the easy is soon made grievous by the swift-transforming sphere.
Forth will it drive, remorseless, when it deemeth the time at hand,
The king from his court and castle, the lord from his house and land.
Ne'er was exemption granted, since the spheres began to run,
From the shadow of dark eclipses to the radiant Moon and Sun.
Whate'er seems cheap and humble and low of the things of earth
Reckon it dear and precious, for Time shall lend it worth.
Seek for the mean in all things, nor strive to fulfil your gain,
For the Moon when the full it reacheth is already about to wane.

* * * * *

Though the heady wine of success should all men drug and deceive,
Pass thou by and leave them, as the sober the drunkards leave.
For the sake of the gaudy plumage which the flying peacocks wear,
See how their death is compassed by many a springe and snare!

* * * * *

Thy body to thee is a fetter, and the world a prison-cell:
To reckon as home this prison and chains do you deem it well?
Thy soul is weak in wisdom, and naked of works beside:
Seek for the strength of wisdom; thy nakedness strive to hide.

* * * * *

Thy words are the seed; thy soul is the farmer; the world thy field:
Let the farmer look to the sowing, that the soil may abundance yield.

* * * * *

Yet dost thou not endeavour, now that the Spring is here,
To garner a little loaflet for the Winter which creepeth near.

* * * * *

The only use and profit which life for me doth hold
Is to weave a metrical chaplet of coral and pearls and gold!

No. 5 (pp. 8–10).

Though the courts of earthly rulers have shut their doors in my face,
Shall I grieve, when I still have access to the Court of the Lord of Grace?
In truth I desire no longer to deal with the mighty and proud,
Beneath whose burden of favour my back would be bent and bowed.

* * * * *

To con the Holy Scriptures, to renounce, to strive, to know—
These are the Four Companions who ever beside me go.

The Eye, the Heart, and the Ear through the long night-watches speak,
And with their counsels strengthen my body so frail and weak.
"Guard me well, I pray thee, and prison me close," saith the Eye,
"From gazing on things forbidden, and the lust that comes thereby."
"Close the road against me, and close it well," saith the Ear,
"To every lying slander, to gossip and spiteful sneer."
What saith the Heart within me? "From Passion's curse and ban
"Keep me pure and unspotted, as befits an upright man."
Then crieth the voice of Reason, "To me was the watch and ward
"Over thy soul and body given by God the Lord.
"Hold thou nor speech nor commerce with the armies of Hate and Lust,
"For I am there to confront them, and to fight them if fight they must."
Against the commands of Reason can I rebel and revolt,
When I am preferred through Reason alone to the veriest dolt?
For the Fiend had caught and constrained me to walk in his captives' train,
And 't was Reason who came and saved me, and gave me freedom again.
'T was Reason who seized my halter and forced me out of the road
Whereby the Fiend would have led me at last to his own abode.
Though this Cave of the World is truly a tenement dark and dire,
If my "Friend of the Cave" be Reason what more can my heart desire?
Deem not the world, O my son, a thing but to hate and to flee,
For a hundred thousand blessings it hath yielded even to me.
Therein is my walk and achievement, my tongue and my gift of speech;
It yields me a ground of action, and offers me scope for each:
And ever it cries in warning, "I am hastening fast away,
"So clasp me close to your bosom, and cherish me while you may."

* * * * *

Reason was ever my leader, leading me on by the hand,
Till it made me famed for Wisdom through the length and breadth of the land.
Reason it was which gave me the Crown of Faith, I say,
And Faith hath given me Virtue, and strength to endure and obey.

* * * * *

Since Faith at the Last Great Judgment can make my reckoning light,
Shall I fear, if Faith require it, to lose my life outright?
So the world is now my quarry, and the hunter who hunts am I,
Though I was once the quarry in the days that are now gone by.
Though others it hunt and capture, I stand from its dangers clear:
My soul is higher than Fortune: then why should I Fortune fear?